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SONNETS,
REFLECTIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE;
AND
OTHER POEMS.

1875

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SONNETS,
REFLECTIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY
Patrick Robertson
LORD ROBERTSON, LL.D.



"This is a gift that I have, simple, simple; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions." "These are delivered upon the mellowing of occasion."—SHAKESPEARE.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART., M.P.,

&c. &c. &c.,

WHOSE DEVOTED PATRIOTISM, INTREPID SELF-RELIANCE,
AND COMPREHENSIVE GENIUS

AS A STATESMAN ;

GRACEFUL AND IMPRESSIVE DICTION, LUCID ARRANGEMENT,
AND PROFOUND RESOURCES

AS AN ORATOR ;

REFINED TASTE, AND VARIED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AS A SCHOLAR ;

AND WHOSE ENLIGHTENED AND GENEROUS ENCOURAGEMENT
OF SCIENCE, ART, AND LITERATURE

HAVE RENDERED HIS NAME ILLUSTRIOUS;

This Volume is most respectfully dedicated,

BY HIS FAITHFUL HUMBLE SERVANT,

PAT. ROBERTSON.

EDINBURGH, SEPTEMBER 1849.



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P R E F A C E.

OVER the fair field of descriptive and reflective poetry it is my delight to wander. I would rather be a worshipper at this shrine of the Muses than journey through realms whose altitudes I may never attain, or dream of the loftier visions of philosophy, which I may never realize. If I can reach the recesses of the heart by one sketch of nature's ever-varying aspect,—strike one chord on that harp which slumbereth not by night nor by day,—prolong one note inspired by the harmony which dwells around us,—or gladden the soul by one reflection ere its shadow sink beneath the ceaseless surges of time,—then so far am I a poet,—or at least a friend, whose society is prized,

and whose memory shall be cherished. How strange that the aspiration for what may never be, and what, alas! can never be felt, has an influence with the children of imagination, more potent than the proudest realities of the passing hour. Such was the requital the loftiest son of song awarded to him who should "fend the Muses' Bower,"—a guerdon brighter than the dazzling of the horizon which now surrounds us.

Nor let it be said that in these utilitarian days the power of poetry has ceased, or that no practical good can result from its cultivation. This may not be. Although poetry does not seek, like didactic philosophy, to unfold with rigid scrutiny the mysteries of the human soul;—nor aspire to wield the sceptre of the kingdom within, as if she were the guiding power which regulated our actions, and controlled the vast and varied energies by which thought constructs its countless creations—yet doth she alleviate the asperities of life—speed the web in the struggles

of daily and duller tasks—express fresher colours, embued with the glowing fervour of the imagination, or tinged with the fleeting hues of fancy,—thus giving a softened, yet healthful, balm to the exhausting toils of harsher study.

And there are in all aspects of society, from the rudest to the most refined, gentle and noble sympathies, which poetry alone may sustain. He must indeed be a stern and cold—nay, a false reasoner, who sees no utility in what does not profess to contain mathematical precision, philosophic speculation, or scientific development. This partial restriction would at once annihilate the fine arts. Amid such discipline the fibres of the heart would become rigid, or decay, and the machine, thus impeded, would stand still, as if the stream by which it was nourished had become frozen in the chill of an atmosphere bleaker than winter ever knew. The rude warrior who takes for his goblet the skull of his slaughtered foe, and forms a drum from the ghastly skin, has still the chaunt of a wild

ballad to evoke his savage enthusiasm. The refined voluptuary, amid the allurements of Eastern magnificence, will indite, in languid strains mayhap, but still in measured numbers, "a sonnet to his mistress' eyebrow." And need I say, that between these extremes, so far asunder, there are countless haunts for more graceful, more vigorous, and more plaintive song. Poetry is the sun of the intellectual system. It illumines every clime—it cheers every season; and although its fruitage may be fairest and most luxuriant in that temperate zone where learning and refinement put forth their stately branches, it doth not wither amid the sirocco of contending passions, nor perish in the regions of thick-ribbed ice, the sad abode of cheerless poverty.

Poetry is the lover's talisman—the warrior's watch-word—the hero's reward. It is the solace of the humble—"the balm of hurt minds." It is the scholar's pastime. It offers to the recluse his breviary—to piety her hymn. So sacred and universal is its sway that science and statecraft

welcome it to their courts ; history proudly borrows its legends, and even the dreary routine of barter may not forswear its influence. It is the friend of the philosopher—the comrade of the enthusiast. The cradle and the altar, the temple and the mausoleum, are its dwelling-places. The toil-tossed city owns its presence. It peoples with its varied memories the desolation of the wilderness. It echoes among the mountains—whispers among the woods. It speaks in the tempest. It revels among the flowers, or lingers with the beams of the rainbow. It gilds the meridian sun, counts the fires of heaven, and greets the crescent moon. It is the record of the past—the day-star of the present—the prophet of futurity.

Nor, in the advancement of society, shall fanaticism bedim the lustre, or vicissitude impede the progress of poetry. To childhood's fleeting fancy she roams as the flaunting butterfly. Youth greets her amid the flowers that bloom at break of day, while the dews still glisten on the slen-

der stem. Manhood beholds her in the stately tree, whose leaves are fanned by the gales of truth, as reason whispers among the boughs. And age, though winter lour, clings like ivy around her with chastened remembrance. She lingered with COWPER amid bodily suffering, and on the confines of mental aberration. SOUTHEY, as he sung of Thalaba, charmed from far eastern worlds a splendour which illumined the dark atmosphere of his brooding imagination. KEATS revelled in her sunshine though the fountain of life was ebbing. SHELLEY, amid all his errors and the pangs of his exile, grasped her to his impassioned heart. She sustained, throughout his misanthropy, the wayward soul of BYRON. The spectred forms of her fantasies were gathered from their wildest abodes, to flicker amidst the dream-like reveries of him who chartered over far crystalline seas the barque of "the grey-eyed Marinere." Her handmaids, attired in robes of more sober beauty, and bearing the richest balm from tree and shrub

and flower,—from the primrose, the snowdrop, or lily of the stream,—still minister to the profound aspirations and deep sympathies of the time-honored bard who is yet the pride of England. BURNS—her rustic son, embued with the fervour of genius—pierced the spirit of nature, while he ploughed the rude soil of his fatherland. Guided by that lode-star, SCOTT bore the buffetings of stepdame fortune, steering his course to the haven of honor amid the harsh gales of adversity. The blindness of MILTON, through her divine solace, caused holy light the more to shine inward, and to shed a ray of deathless fame. And finally, by the banks of Avon, SHAKSPEARE communed with humanity in every aspect, and, mingling the brightest creations of fancy with the lessons of profound philosophy, circled in his boundless sway the inmost secrets of the heart.

But if it be suggested that these remarks tend rather to illustrate the glories than to define the character of poetry, I answer that definition implies

limit,—and her limits who has ventured to define ? I would remind those who speak of poetry as lofty thought embodied in measured language, how infinite is the variety of form in which her presence may be evoked. Her handmaids are the solemn hexameter and the light and graceful iambic. She roams from the epithalamium to the elegy—from the loftiest vision of philosophy—the solemn hymn of devotion—to the light story of the ballad and the jocund song of the reveller. Her temple is the minster, and the mosque—her music the pealing organ, and the plaintive lute. If, again, it be said that her territory is bounded by the realms of imagination and fancy, I bid them search the regions of wit and humour, or voyage through the mighty empire of truth. Thus, it is not in extent of dominion, that she spurns restraint more than in variety. Who, then, shall enchain such vast,—such ethereal,—such dazzling attributes ? It is as impossible as to embody in language the precise difference betwixt the shadow

which broods over the mist-clad hills, and that which floats along the placid lake ;—or to bind the colours of the rainbow, and mete out the mighty waters ;—or to tell, with perspicuous philology, the chaunt of nature's songsters—the cadence of the moonlit wave—the idiosyncrasy of every sound that intervenes from the alpine torrent to the rill of the lowly valley, betwixt the melody of the human voice, and the roaring of the winter's wind.

Although it may thus be more easy to frame an apology for inditing poetry than to discover its source or prescribe its limit, the difficulty, alas ! still remains,—to reach the fountain whence its empyrean waters flow. And why should a pilgrim so untutored as myself seek to attain that priceless palm which her lofty spirits have already won ? I answer—If the end be good, the labour cannot be vain. In the chorus of mighty song every voice avails, though attuned to the humblest harmony.

I have, in this volume, chiefly adopted the

sonnet as the form of my verses. It is perhaps too artistic for many tastes. But it adapts itself to the desultory waywardness of my impressions, and at the sametime compels me to attend, in some degree at least, to the rules of rigid versification. In this I feel that I must still acknowledge my deficiency. I was late of going to school, and advancing years find me an impatient pupil. The tree bends not like the sapling. But if, sheltered beneath its boughs from the rude atmosphere of daily cares, I have been enabled to gather fruitage where there is no poison, and which may not be deemed distasteful by the lovers of nature and refinement, then shall my efforts be requited. Adieu !

COME fearless Truth, with fervid sympathy
Shed the rich tribute of thy fresh'ning tide
O'er Life's parch'd wilderness—triumphant guide,
Thy Nile majestic, whose proud sov'reignty
Bids the vast Delta of the soul defy
Winter austere—the mellow autumn wave
Her cluster'd glories there. Such wealth to save,
Still proffer love's resistless alchemy!
Enrapt I hear the music of thy stream
Whose diapason swells harmoniously,
While the far echo in seraphic dream,
Thrilleth my trustful heart rejoicingly,—
As o'er that palm-robed land some mystic sound
Waketh each pyramid, with awe profound.

REFLECTIVE SONNETS.

PART I.

THE HISTORY OF THE

1784

I.

My thoughts, alas ! are as a multitude,
More in confusion dash'd, than blent aright,
As envoys rob'd amid pervading light ;
Thus, while I loiter, wrapt in pensive mood,
How oft will fancy's wayward groups intrude,
Mild reason marring in her tranquil sway,
As envious phantoms o'er truth's placid ray
Dimming the halo of her plenitude.
Oh for a classic lyre to summon all
Thy hosts, fond memory ! in rich array,
Genius to guide me in such proud essay,
Imagination high my cherish'd thrall,
New glories winning from that cloudless clime,
Where tow'rs immortal poesy sublime.

II.

What tho' youth's bounding joys have fled from
me,

Life's varied scenes engrav'd no rich impress,

Like shadows fleeting o'er a wilderness ;

Tho' fancy's fairest bow'rs neglected be,

Fond nature still vouchsafes her melody,

And in my gushing heart tumultuous spring

(As my soul thrilleth with the murmuring)

Artesian fonts of fervid poesy.—

My aspiration proud,—in faithful strain,

(Tho' rude the note that wakes my froward reed),

A minstrel's boon to waft, with glowing speed,

Thro' fairy realms. Ne'er may such rapture wane

Unto a changeful theme,—a dream-like tale,

But o'er each kindred sympathy prevail.

III.

An argosy behold, whose ardent crew,
By genius charter'd to a fadeless clime,
The surges spurn of darkly rolling time ;
To fear these bold explorers bid adieu !
For realms empyrean bound, their hopes renew—
Anchor at length where love,—immortal truth,
Fancy, and wisdom, blend in peerless youth ;
Proud sons of song, ah, were my barque with you,
For ye are mighty voyagers,—the chart
Of the mind's ocean, to your wistful ken
Its sinuous friths expands—your wondrous art
Fathoms the shoreless depths, and yet amain
Throughout the paradise of thought ye fly,
The glories waking of that mystic sky.

IV.

There is a hush, before the dawn of day
Silence dispels, ere yet her radiant wing
Bids echo greet the holy summoning ;
Solemn that lull, and yet methinks how gay,
It cheers the brooklet's matin roundelay ;
Rich as the murmur of the eager throng
Whose notes the woods awake with varied song,
Calm as the slumb'ring waters far away.
Ah ! that a breathing-time like this to youth
Nature vouchsaf'd, the gift of one chaste hour,
Ere the bright blossoms of that fragile flow'r
Their hues expand ;—aye, thus might hallow'd
truth,
On blest reflection's fervid pinion borne,
Enthroned, 'mid fancy's dews, a brighter morn.

V.

Nay think again. Thought is the boon of heav'n,
Reflection wraps the heart in calm control,
The brightest visitant that soothes the soul :
The starless mind through mist-clad rack is driv'n,
The chart forgot, ne'er hath its promise thriv'n,
No bow prophetic spans that cheerless waste,
The future pointing as the past is trac'd,
No hope vouchsaf'd that idlesse be forgiv'n ;
Nor deem that star resplendent ere may wane,—
O'er life's horizon lustrous still remain
Thy heav'n-born beams, in hue prismatic shed,
Refracted tenfold ere the halo fled—
Thou gem serene, spangling the lucid sky,
The herald thou, of immortality.

VI.

Fathom on fathom still, as plummet sent
Down the dark bosom of a chartless sea,
That realm explore, with fervid sympathy,
Where dwells the teeming soul. On this intent,
Needless the aid of skill-priz'd instrument ;
Wave upon wave the morning current flows,
Ebbeth at genial eve in calm repose,
While blest reflection gems that firmament.
Ah, then, with high resolve, the task begin,
O'er these perplexing confines wander free,
This priceless boon thine earnest heart may win
To know that region's varied history,—
How on its shores, as billows wildly meet,
Eventful tides their mysteries repeat.

VII.

Ah ! who shall tell, or when, or where, the thought,
Vivid as meteor shot athwart the gloom,
May with electric flash that sphere illumine ?
Not from the depths of silent mem'ry brought,
Nor in the web of meditation wrought,
But ere the thrilling impulse seems to stir,
Comes like a star that wingèd messenger,
With halo bright, from inspiration caught ;
Yet deem not thou such heav'n-born visitant
A guide assur'd may be : Ah ! ne'er rely
On fitful rays that flicker but to die,
Nought to the noonday soul administrant,
Would ye the treasures of that casket find ?
'Tis learning's spell awakes the teeming mind.

VIII.

Thoughts in the soul,—their echoes lost afar
Amid the murmur of time's changeful tide,
Beyond the wrath of storm-fraught doom,—abide
Beyond the turmoil of life's fated war,
Whose pure record disaster may not mar.
Heedless o'er them tumultuous surges rage,
Tho' brooding darkness wilder storms presage,
Faithful they rest, calm as the vesper star.
Ah, might I brave these vast unfathom'd seas,
With wisdom's tidings bless'd, returning thence,
In buoyant hope, upon the gladd'ning breeze,
Fain would I bring the high intelligence ;
From these proud confines thro' the ambient air,
My ransom'd wealth on wings of triumph bear.

IX.

Hark ! morn awakes with nature's cheering voice,
" My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne,"
Health, pow'r, unsullied honor—all mine own.—
Now is the day of fervid rapture's choice,
The sun is bright, the waves make gentle noise,
Each knoll, and meadow, varied verdures crown,
As Hope with ever glowing flow'rs bestrown,
That harp inspires which bids the world rejoice.
Ah ! dire mishap may mock the freshest bloom,
Faintly the fragrant garland veil the tomb,
Clouds o'er the azure gather,—storm-toss'd seas
Their surges swell amid the changeful breeze,
As age, night's solemn handmaid hov'ring nigh,
With sable robe encompasseth that sky.

X.

Whoe'er hath caught, mid woodland witchery,
The cadence of the breeze, treasur'd the sound
Of the lone wave in symphony profound,
Hoarded the ling'ring echo ere it die,
In the deep bosom of the star-lit sky,
Or, as the dewdrops gleam at vesper time,
The slumb'ring reed, the folding flow'rets chime,
While o'er the world hush'd nature seems to sigh,
His ear hath drunk sweet music—fervidly,
(Touch'd with the burthen of the tranquil hymn,
As gusheth forth that soothing requiem,)
His heart exhales,—the heav'n-born harmony.
May oft within my soul remembrance spring,
Of hours that shrine such holy visiting !

XI.

What city proudly rear'd in glad array,
Fadeless dominion wields so fair as this,
Imagination's bright metropolis?
Sun, moon, and stars, the dawn, the twilight grey,
In rainbow glory blent, chase gloom away,—
An em'rald ocean murmurs at thy feet,
Whose bounding waters court each fond retreat;
The glowing azure spans thy radiant day—
Within thy fairy domes the summer balm
Wafteth empyrean odour,—silv'ry tow'rs
Bath'd in the beauty of enchanted hours,
Soft music echo 'mid resplendent calm,—
No discord harsh, nor pain, nor care-born wants,
Marring the day-dream of thy habitants.

XII.

Still o'er a dream-nurs'd world, where shadows dim
Cloud not, from dawn to eve, the radiant sky,
'Mid form fantastic, changeful witchery,
Thy child, oh Fancy, roams. No task for him,
The lamp of dull reality to trim,
Unveil'd tho' faintly to his fervid eye
The faithful stars that gem thy galaxy,
Yet to his heart respond thy seraphim ;
Around him Nature folds her holy wing,
Him the fond zephyrs woo, the murm'ring tide
Her cadence lends, the sparkling streamlets glide,
As life's bright flow'rs their summer fragrance fling ;
Nor call him wayward,—o'er these realms below
The hues ah ! bid him grasp that tinge thy bow.

XIII.

Depths which ne'er render'd back the plummet's
sound,

Bright worlds that roll beyond the Starrèd sky,

Harmonious chords of nature's sympathy,

The mystic pow'r, that sheddeth verdure round,

Allures the honied fruitage to the ground,

Guides the unerring magnet o'er the sea,

The flowret perfumes,—robes the stately tree,

Ocean awaketh in her dread profound ;—

Wonders the raptur'd seer may ne'er descry,

Nor genius clasp in fervid extacy ;—

Yet in the element of truthful thought,

In the faint sigh by faithful echo caught,

Or the soft ray that cheers the infant eye,

As silent sleeps th' unfathom'd mystery.

XIV.

Among the rugged cliffs, some fragile flow'r,
Sport of the scathing sun,—the blighting storm,
Day after day sustains her drooping form,
The tear drop watcheth of the fresh'ning show'r,
Hoarding the balm of matin's blooming hour ;
Tho' peevish mildew oft her waning leaves,
Of summer fragrance stealthily bereaves,
It lingers still—nor heeds the wrathful hour.—
Thus be thy fate, where no soft breezes woo
The verdant plain,—cast on some sterile strand,
Where warring waves assail the naked land,
Cling to thy kindred home,—a patriot true ;—
Maugre the clouds that brood o'er dark dismay,
A light shall cheer thee thro' the storm-fraught
day.

XV.

Thou peaceful tarn amid the silent hills,
The moonbeam on thy bosom, spell-bound snows
Couch'd on the pathless summit's stern repose,
Thou cloudless azure when thy semblance fills
The ocean depths, as balmy dew distils
Fresh fragrance of the morn,—vales lost afar
Stealing the rapture of the vesper star,
Lull'd by the murmur of unnumber'd rills,
Ye whisper blest tranquillity,—ye seem
Of other worlds to tell !—Yet unto me
A holier rest is imag'd in the dream,—
The angel dream,—of slumb'ring infancy ;
The artless hopes tending that trustful smile,
To brighter realms my musing soul beguile.

XVI.

Aye nature's moral in each glitt'ring show'r,
Each truant breeze of coming sunshine tells,
The note of early springtime syllables.
Tho' devastation claim her sternest dow'r,
Hope still undying, with benignant pow'r,
Will not depart, but like the stately tree
Baffle chill winter's dread austerity,
As morn the gloom dispels of midnight hour.—
Thus o'er the mind, despite the fated storm,
When stern disaster sheds her ruthless blight,
Within some cherish'd precinct lurks the form
Of unsunn'd blossom, struggling to the light,—
Thro' gather'd clouds upspringing, as the lark
To greet the dawn, tho' mist-clad wolds be dark.

XVII.

Oh! earth, swart toil thou dost demand,—not more
To earn the treasures from thy fertile breast,
Than in benignant season—needful rest,
Yet care's dark clouds ne'er fling their shadows o'er
Thy stately form, no legendary lore
The blooming lily vauntingly arrays,
Nor Fame thy silent heart elates with praise,
No fev'rish conflict wakes thy teeming shore.
Come Peace, the mind's tumultuous tides allay,
Boon oft implor'd! There countless wrecks of time,
Prophetic mists, dreams nurs'd by care-worn day,
Learning's sad heritage in ev'ry clime
Their dread dominion blend, yet hope how vain
That o'er such restless waves repose would reign.

XVIII.

A spring-rob'd cloud art thou of silv'ry white,
Or wreath of winter's still enduring snow
Forsaken slumb'ring on the mountain's brow ?
On her dark mantle gleams thy fringe as light
As gaysome skiff in trim array bedight
On ocean's lordly bosom,—as the wing
Of stately swan the lake meandering,
Or the moon's halo in the mist-fraught night :
Thus fitful hope, oft times from spheres unknown,
Flickers athwart man's doom,—around dismay,
O'er life's dim shadows still evokes her own
Refulgent dawn, amid contending sway ;—
Ah, might we reach the hallow'd fount whence flows
Such blissful rapture,—win such calm repose.

XIX.

Perturbèd waters, to some sullen sea
A verdant leaf may thro' their turmoil bear,
'Mid cheerless wastes heart-thrilling messenger!—
As if glad tidings from far realms there be
Wrapt in the calm of woodland witchery,
Where silent vales primæval verdure shields,
Th' effluence of whose ever-blooming fields
On arid wilds would shed serenity.—
Thus, 'mid the gushings of the storm-toss'd mind,
Thro' care's stern wilderness some emblem pure
Of joy embalm'd,—memorial frail yet kind
Its record keeps—thus fervid shall endure
Some ray of hope,—amid the soul's sad gloom,
With faithful light the dread abyss illume.

XX.

Portentous o'er the mind's horizon sail
Thought's spectr'd planets, in strange mazes blent,
As boding rack athwart the firmament,
Dim as the shadows of a time-worn tale,
Toss'd to and fro by ev'ry fitful gale ;
Yet 'mid the gloom what rays resplendent fling
Their struggling light, new glory gathèring,
As the bright bow doth o'er the storm prevail ;—
Aye on their course do satellites await,
More tyrant still, from phantom realms afar,
Where dreams their mystic vassals congregate,
In trembling groups, as wanes the latest star ;
Yet these some spell enthrals, with subtle pow'r,
Their sèmbulance hov'ring o'er the waking hour.

XXI.

Ye envoys dread ! why flit your shadows nigh ?
Is it to warn us, or with fear appal,
Ye thus revisit your ancestral hall,
Dark with the brooding mist of years gone by ?
Do earth-born dreams allure such sympathy ?
Can cherish'd nature woo you near this scene ?
Or doth some bright memorial intervene,
Embalm'd in legends of your chivalry ?
Secrets of mightier import ye would tell,
Fraught with the hues of heav'n imperishable,
A changeless band ! methinks your mission high,
The drooping heart with fadeless hope to cheer,
Unveil as now the closing hour draws near,
The envied home of blest serenity !

XXII.

The mildew'd morn, blight in the noon-day rose,
Fair fruitage scath'd ere yet the autumn sun
His mellow ray hath shed,—clouds gath'ring dun
The azur'd spring to chide, or sullen snows
Courting beneath some cliff a vain repose,
As comes the summer's glow,—the rifted oak,
The booming tides which angry gales evoke,
Prophetic all of nature's wintry close!—
Yet thro' the cultur'd glebe, the garden fair,
The laden orchard, or the mist-fraught sky,
O'er mountains couch'd in dread austerity,
O'er ocean's wave,—echo nor faint nor rare
Of renovation comes,—as fervid hope
Of a bright future, casts the horoscope.

XXIII.

Tho' resignation fold her dewy wing,
To nestle in thy heart, the deep impress
Of sorrow past repels forgetfulness.—
A tear-drop lingers in the lap of spring,
Dark clouds eclipse the summer's blossoming,
And as autumnal tides tumultuous roll,
From caverns lone, dread billows of the soul
Unbidden gush,—bleak winter's heralding !
Ah ! who shall tell what ray of boding star,
What fitful moonbeam, on the tranquil breast
Of the hush'd ocean, may invade thy rest,
Thy sunlit hour with sad remembrance mar !—
A faded leaf, a weed, a passing sound,
Stern griefs awake that hover wildly round.

XXIV.

Meteors there are which deeper thoughts presage,
Warnings that o'er life's vaunted zenith fly,
In fitful gleams of solemn augury—
The ruin'd home, the wreck, prophetic page,
Revolving seasons,—now time-honor'd age,
Now blighted youth, flow'rs that forsaken lie,
The rainbow smile of hallow'd sympathy,
Or the sad curfew's knell—the heart engage,—
The stately temple now,—the rippling stream,
Now silent mountains hush'd 'mid nature's dream,
Now cherish'd home-born thoughts will linger
nigh ;
Ah ! bid the still small voice have mastery,
Pillar of cloud by day,—of flame by night,
Dove from the ark, to guide our steps aright.

XXV.

Grandeur a shadow, sympathy how vain,
As gush the waters of oblivion's stream,
Earth's proud memorials a fantastic dream,—
Lo, clouds portentous haste in baleful train !
No morrow's dawn shall gild the scene again,
Nor smile play o'er these lips,—no ling'ring sigh
Break from that heart's forsaken sanctuary,
Silence triumphant holds her solemn reign !—
Th' enfranchis'd pilgrim unto rest hath gone,
A changeless world adopts him as her own ;—
A brighter sun illumines that new found shore,
Whose ray empyrean yields to night no more,
As peace, and purity, and hope, and faith,
With love unite,—in realms where is no death.

XXVI.

Riches is power,—and power is happiness,
Yet as night's sable 'shrouds the glitt'ring day,
Joy unto sorrow yields predestin'd sway ;—
Riches is glory,—yet her ray no less
Circl'd by mists of care,—earth's bleak distress ;—
Riches is friendship,—friends and hopes take wing,
The song of mirth sinketh to sorrowing ;
Where shall the poor bereav'd claim tenderness ?
Far higher guerdon seek, a deathless prize,
The hallow'd boon of heav'n-born avarice,
To this no rival teeming worlds unfold ;
The rubied diadem,—the sceptre's gold,
Wane from their vaunted sphere,—unheeded lie,
As the dull hoards of chill misanthropy.

XXVII.

Riches there are whose lustre ne'er grows dim,
In ransom'd casket store empyrean set,
Of cherish'd purity immaculate.—
Thro' yon proud fane, echoed in hallow'd hymn,
Swellleth the song of radiant cherubim ;
Enwrought mosaic gems these archways bright,
The vault an ever-glowing chrysolite,
Where blissful roam enfranchis'd seraphim ;—
Riches the spell-bound miser may not dream,
The reckless prodigal ne'er cast away,
No clouds in that pure azure intervene,
To mar the rapture of supernal day ;
Ah ! wouldst thou seek this precious pelf to win?—
Invoke that oracle thyself within.

XXVIII.

The stately senate, or the banquet hall,
The dazzling theatre, the field of sport,
Alternate still thy fervid footsteps court,
Mocking reflection's blissful hour, when all
Thy solemn thoughts realities recall ;
Unto such lure proud may thine answer be ;
Call ye these vapid haunts society,
Of each prevailing passion heartless thrall ?
Among the far untrodden woods go find,
Or by the lonely shore, or brooklet's fall,
Or the bleak wold, or mountain pastoral,
That comrade true, a richly cultur'd mind ;
Thus fended, though the idle world intrude
Or silence sway—there is no solitude.

XXIX.

Sustain thine honours meekly: think how frail
The tenure man may boast, fleeting as air
On whose light bosom floats the gossamer,
Tho' faithful echo may prolong the tale,
Vaunting thy deeds, no hapless blight assail
Thy name unsullied, yet the hour how nigh
Fraught with thy sad ancestral heraldry,
Reckless tho' conqu'ring cobwebs warp prevail.—
Still as the tides of time thy barque shall bear
Far on their fitful bosom, buoyant steer,
With high resolve endued,—the glories share
Which in thy fervid heart proud thoughts endear
Of chasten'd victory,—aye gently blend
The Fame that dies, with Hopes which ne'er shall
end.

XXX.

A ship betoss'd, ere yet on ocean's breast
Night's shadows fall, her long-sought haven nears,
As o'er her prow the vesper star appears ;
Cheering her homeward path to envied rest,
The faithful beacon rears its glimm'ring crest ;
Safely encompass'd, her gale-worn wing
Anon she folds 'mid grateful welcoming ;
A stricken bird she finds her tranquil nest.
Ah, ere the twilight o'er thy path descend,
Dread darkness gather round, may hope's bright
ray,
Rob'd in the lustre of benignant day,
Unto thy fragile barque her promise lend ;
Thus at hush'd eve, each varied peril o'er,
Thine advent herald to yon changeless shore.

XXXI.

The orb, the sceptre, the imperial crown,
Resplendent stars which in that zodiac vie,
Whose spheres illumè enthronèd majesty ;
The laurel wreath,—emblem of high renown ;
The graceful folds of learning's sainted gown ;
Banners which o'er contending armies shone,
Crescent and cross and gaudy gonfalon ;
Heraldic pomp with flow'rs victorious strown ;
The hallow'd crosier, and the ermine pure,
The torch of science, and the trump of fame,
The pilgrim's staff, the fervid martyr's name,
All that we holy deem, we boast secure,
Yield to the sable plume,—enshrouded lie,
Beneath th' escutcheon's dread emblazonry.

XXXII.

The fitful Harp is shattered—ah, no more
As at the dawning of primæval light
The severed chords harmoniously unite,
The tide hath ebbed on this eventful shore,
Which claims no echo from the mountains hoar,
From seaward rocks afar. Yet unto me,
Through the dread mist which shrouds that
destiny,
A ray hath pierced,—the seraphim adore—
A placid ocean sleeps beyond, whose wave
Droops like a bird intent with gentle wing,
(As dewy eve her host is gathering,)
The home to win maternal nature gave,
A hallowed semblance of that balmy rest
Which dwells, oh Truth! within thy sainted
breast.

REFLECTIVE SONNETS.

PART II.

I.

CONTENTMENT.

I.

THOU softest breath that wakes the grateful heart,
 Thou zephyr of the soul, as angels wing
 With fragrance fraught thy gentle visiting,
 Aye unto me, content ! thy balm impart,
 Bid proud ambition's restless groups depart,
 The spectred legions of consuming care
 From my frail craft their envious threats forbear,
 Dread mists that crowd the troublèd seas athwart.
 Thou hallowed peace ! the magnet I desire,
 My polar star, my beacon, and my stay,
 The cloud that daily guides, the nightly fire,
 My covenanted bow, ah, let thy ray
 The fear-fraught chambers of my soul illumine.
 With hope, solacing life's eventful doom.

II.

CONTENTMENT.

II.

A gourd vouchsafe, screened by thy branching palm
Which winter sears not,—promise of the spring,
Glory of summer,—autumn's garnering.—
Let stern oblivion claim more frigid calm,
The soul thou dost restore with purest balm,
Unto the heart thy solace gently steals,
Rich melody thy blissful strain reveals,
As nature chaunteth her eternal psalm :—
Though loud the blast that swells the trump of
fame,
Thrilling the poet's lute, the patriot song,
Philosophy her nobler theme proclaim,
Yet unto thee we cling, fears,—hopes among,—
Catching thy heav'n-born echo's faithful tone,
Which soothes the heart benignant, calm, alone !

III.

CONTENTMENT.

III.

Though clouds bedim the azure of our sky,
Serene thy voyage still,—benign content,
Fair star that sways a fickle firmament !
Joy's faithless coruscations swiftly fly,
Hope's changeful meteors faintly flicker nigh,
Fear casts portentous shadows,—not in vain
Dismay evokes the spectred groups of pain,
Embalmèd thou in blest tranquillity !
Clouds may not darken, tempest dread enthrall
Thy pure resolve, nor may the lurid sun
Nor comets wild, as mystic course they run,
Nor spell-fraught moon thy saint-like calm appal,
Thou art the beacon of the storm-toss'd barque,
The dove that hov'reth o'er the wave-worn ark.

IV.

ENTERPRISE.

I.

Faith, love, and friendship, health, and dawning joy,
As youth's light shallop bounding ever free,—
O'er the bright waters sparkle gladsomely,
May no fell cloud such promise fair alloy,
Ah ! ne'er may blight the teeming spring destroy,
Sunshine still cheer thee, on thy fervid way,
The tranquil moonbeam shed her blissful ray,
While soaring hopes thy dauntless thoughts employ.
On life's rude voyage fearlessly he flies,
Borne on the breeze of daring enterprise,
May wisdom's magnet nerve that vent'rous hand,
Some heav'n-lit beacon point the "promis'd land,"
Though tempest wild should rend the seas—the
sky,
O'er peril's path steer Thou exultingly.

V.

ENTERPRISE.

II.

On, on he speedeth o'er the swelling surge,
The thunder heeds not in the boding sky,
Nor the grim waters roaring vengefully—
O'er ev'ry clime his eager course to urge,
Now seeking lands unknown mayhap diverge,
His shattered sail unfurled, he doth intrude
On gloomy spheres of shiv'ring latitude,
Whose frozen seas disdain the winter's dirge.
Ah ! whence the courage thus to brave the wreck,
Cling through disaster to the fated deck,
Or from the ocean cast, in dread uproar,
The savage quelling on his torrid shore ?
Not from ancestral honors,—nurs'd by art,
It springs impassioned from the glowing heart.

VI.

ELOQUENCE.

Though couched in groves of memory they lie,
Eager these "airy servitors" upspring,
Their graceful groups obey thy summoning,
As gushing streams the faithful vassals hie
Each theme to swell with thrilling harmony,
Soaring on bold imagination's wing,
With thought profound their flight attempering,
Through all thy spheres, benign philosophy!—
Unto the pure thine echo ever dear,
Thee doth the patriot laud—the reckless fear,
To the lone covert of the stricken heart
Thou dost inspiring melody impart,
Courage to nerve, o'er worlds to rule intent,
By hosts enthroned of fervid argument.

VII.

LIBERTY.

Ye slumb'ring realms awake ! frankincense bring,
Unsullied to that oratory hie,
Breathing time-hallow'd benedicite !—
The summer's garland, flow'ret of the spring,
The mellowed autumn's grateful gathering,
All that we holy deem, undying, pure,
From stern oppression's tyranny secure,
Lay on that altar,—fervid offering !
Bid chaunt of patriot hymn her echo fling,
From every ransomed land proud heralding,
Rome's noble story in rich fresco borne,
Bid Albion's banner still these tow'rs adorn,
Peace guard the portal, honour claim the shrine,—
Immortal glories, Liberty, are thine !

VIII.

GENIUS.

I.

As through the brooding mist, and sullen wave,
The lord of morning robed in pristine pow'r,
His glory sheddeth o'er the new-born hour,
The stars to him their spangled kingdom gave,
These burning wheels celestial fountains lave,
No clouds the splendour of that sphere bedim,
Bright worlds his advent greet in wond'rous hymn,
Darkness, abashed, resumes her ancient cave.—
Thus genius waked, ah ! thus her ray divine
Lit reason's torch, from radiant spheres on high
Piercing the clouds of time.—Proud triumph
thine,
O'er the dark future's boding mystery,
A mighty promise doth thy dawn unfold,
The poet's guerdon—prophet-like foretold.

IX.

GENIUS.

II.

How my rapt soul dwells amid dreams of those,
Within thy matchless mould majestic cast,
Poet, philosopher, enthusiast !
At thy behest the star of Shakspeare rose,
Milton's bright torch did Paradise disclose,
Thou dost the planetary spheres unveil,
The angry seas bid daring pilot hail,
Life's fairest fruit thy bounteous hand bestows ;—
Fraught with celestial dew, thy laurel'd urn,
The summer's flow'rets blooming at thy feet,
O'er all in fragrance show'ring blest return,
Who from thy garner richest boon entreat ;—
As to untutor'd son, one leaf to me,
Give from the chaplet of thy chivalry.

X.

GENIUS.

III.

Unto thy lofty alabaster dome,
Whose fairy pinnacles, crystalline sheen,
With ruby, amethyst, illumine the scene,
I fain would hie !—Unto thine altar come,
Within thy hallow'd cloisters seek a home,
But my rude step might mar their raptur'd rest
Who sleep beneath, in thy memorial blest ;—
Alas ! I may not o'er these regions roam.
There float the spirits of the mighty dead,
Soothed by empyrean music evermore,
Won from celestial harps,—encanopied
The choir attendant thrilling accents pour
In deep response : still be the solace mine
To worship meekly at thy sacred shrine.

XI.

GENIUS.

IV.

Who to thy stately temple fervid hie,
Through fickle clouds piercing, with soul intent,
The wond'rous stars that gem thy firmament—
Thou fairest envoy of the seraph sky,
Sprung from the mines of pearled poesy ?
These massive steeps benignant science clomb,
Led by ambition to that cherish'd home,
Thy guardian angel, calm philosophy—
Truth at thy portal lends her golden key,
Fancy, amid the splendour of that dome,
Spell-bound, enchains each ardent votary ;
See proud imagination fearless come,
Incense to offer as the hallowed chime,
Of pealing music pours thy hymn sublime.

XII.

GENIUS.

V.

Veil after veil withdrawn, yet how obscure
Unto the earnest ken of mortal eye,
Thy cloisters wrapt in dream-like mystery !
Who may the dazzling of these gifts endure,
The glory beaming from thine altar pure ?
Few to thy shrine draw nigh, alas ! how few
Their hopes with thine electuary embue,
Thy halcyon largess in their soul secure !
“ To me thine incense meekly bring,” she cries,
Search thou the records of my deathless fame,
To win the guerdon of such loved emprise,
Among my chosen pilgrims earn a name,—
The way is clear as dawn, whose radiant dow’r
New splendour sheddeth at the dew-fraught hour.

XIII.

GENIUS.

VI.

As on th' horizon's verge the moon doth swim,
Shedding her placid smile o'er fading star,
Amid the gleams of satellites afar,
Tingeing the mists which earth's dull disc bedim,
Sweet Avè list'ning from the vesper hymn,
How fond she lingers in her waning light,
Calmly unfolding treasures infinite,
Hoarded to bless eve's sainted requiem !—
Thus at belated hour thy parting ray
To the dim confines of my wond'ring soul
Some loved memorial gently would convey,—
As Hope discloses Life's benignant goal—
Still o'er the twilight of this fleeting sky
Casting the halo of thy majesty.

XIV.

GENIUS.

VII.

Exhaustless theme ! 'Twere well some classic reed,
Attuned to music of empyrean song,
Thy laud in thrilling anthem would prolong,
For unto thee, alas ! accordant meed
My scrannel-pipe to wake was ne'er decreed,
Hushed then my lay,—let nobler hymn arise—
To chaunt the legends of thy paradise,
As heav'n-born hopes unto thine altar lead:
Yet ah ! my pardon seal, while thus " Farewell "
In rude note lingers on my fervid lyre,
And from these realms to which thy sons aspire,
All thine imperishable glory tell ;
As dew-drop trembleth in the morning ray,
Thy presence pales my proudest roundelay.

XV.

Ah for a land where no dread poverty,
Nor kindred cares, portentous shadows cast,—
Each morrow's dawning brighter than the past !
The rose, the lily, heliotrope are nigh,
Rich flow'rs of ever-during fragrancy,
From forth whose glowing bosoms gently spring,
As zephyrs tend their balmy blossoming,
Hope, Love, and Joy,—impassioned sympathy ;
There truth, with stately branches, from the storm
Shall fend each timid sapling,—softest dews,
By blest reflection shed,—nurture the form
Of infant leaf, or drooping herb,—aye muse
Where blooms that fabled realm,—a fairy isle,
By Fancy girt with Hope's seraphic smile.

XVI.

They led the *blind* man forth,—that snow-clad
brow,
Furrowed by fourscore winters, as the rills
By torrents ploughed adown majestic hills,
Embathed in glowing sunshine ;—meekly now
Transcendent sympathies his hopes avow,
As thus his heart beatitude receives
From the rich music of the balmy leaves—
The breath of summer borne from every bough.
No darkness shrouds the ever tranquil mind,
No shadow broods athwart the just and true,
Where fervid thoughts their witchery renew,
By calm reflection's alchemy refined ;—
How faint the landscape in the lucid stream
To its bright semblance borne in memory's dream.

XVII.

Each star he sees that glimmers in the sky,
Yet are the pealing thunders to his ear,
The rolling surge which whelms the mariner,
The tyrant winds that through the wild woods fly,
Mute as the chords of slumb'ring Harmony !
Hushed as the fleecy snow-flake's gentle fall—
The avalanche whose threats the vale appal,
Or from the heaving earth the dread reply ;
Still is he not obdurate—ah ! within
Thrilleth the hallowed anthem of content,
Of seraph song the soft embodiment.
He thence with nature doth communion win,
As if his heart would listen—*deaf* alone
The churl who spurns the haloes of her throne!

XVIII.

Thy form how varied, dire calamity !
No sound ere trembled on these *silent* lips,
Yet, like the ray which pierceth dim eclipse,
A smile illumes that face,—the speaking eye
Proclaims the mind's impassioned mastery !
When strains Æolian flee the lonely lute,
Their spirit liveth though the chords be mute,
The charm but hushed which woke their melody ;
No silence thus, where thought is throned, may
 dwell,
Nor by the darkness of the sealèd lid
The vision of the mind encompassèd ;
Nor shall the ear disown such potent spell.
What then our senses ?—Surges of that tide
Which the soul's mandate tremulous abide.

XIX.

Ye ministers empyrean, from the spheres
Of love and proud intelligence, who scan
With tender care the destinies of man,
What to your heav'n-born sympathy endears
Our thoughts and hopes—our penitence and tears ?
Why pierce the clouds that veil life's teeming fate—
The secrets of our being penetrate—
Thrill with our joys, and falter with our fears ?
Bright emanations are ye of that mind
Encircling worlds afar, whose sleepless eye
Still in each aspect of infinity
Complacent rests. 'Tis thus the light refined
From hosts seraphic cheers the high emprise
They strive to win who seek these kindred skies.

XX.

Send forth, oh trembling earth, a deep reply
Unto these holy visitings ! Ah feel
The mighty truth such angel hosts reveal ;
Let pæan proud be thine, Hosannah high,
The cymbal's clang, the stringèd psaltery ;
Amid the throbbings of a grateful heart,
Whose quick vibrations all thy hopes impart,
Responsive gushing to that mystery ;
Nor dread with these the bonds of love to name,
Though purer, elder-born,—that seraph race
Shall ransomed man with tenderness embrace—
In realms too hallowed yet for him to claim,
When Time's relenting mists have passed away,
That seer-told advent dawns in fadeless day.

XXI.

The bards renowned their pearls of poesy
Link in no fragile chain ;—these thoughts, alas !
As phantoms shadowed in a flick'ring glass
Or severed clouds dissolve,—nor unto me
May dawn the day-star of futurity ;—
Ah ! if to nature one responsive tone
The wayward minstrel garner as his own,
Time yet may charm the latent harmony.
The past, the present, and the hour to come,
Whose wondrous echoes—as the ceaseless hum
Of ocean's fitful waves—breathe still the same,
Each fleeting cycle varied but in name ;—
Thus strains prophetic thrill the ransomed lyre,
Though quenched the torch that waked her pristine
fire.

DESCRIPTIVE SONNETS.

I.

My harp is silent in the peaceful vale,
Nor wakes the tangled wood ; the rippling stream
Boasts but the cadence of a nobler theme ;—
Æolian anthems o'er thy chords prevail
When cloud-clad summits, as the storms assail,
Majestic symphonies resound afar,
Beneath the waning moon, the fitful star,—
Proudly thy music mingles with the gale.
Such thrilling chorus thine—no languid note—
Like wave-born murmur on the summer wind,
Sweet serenade in Fancy's rapture kind,
Shall with thy vent'rous echoes dare to float ;
Beneath a sterner sway the prelude nigh,
Whose legends breathe thy wayward minstrelsy.

II.

The lake, the tarn, the river—mountain stream,
Each valley, hill, and shore,—the ceaseless sea
Their native honors echo fervidly—
Beyond the limner's wealth their marvels teem,
Beyond the rapture of the poet's dream,
In perfume wafted by the grateful breeze,
Or with the note of home-born melodies,
In fadeless memory enshrined they seem !—
Aye, once embalmed, should oceans intervene,
The semblance liveth of the cherished scene,
Full on the mirror of the heart confest,
Through time's dark mists that presence manifest.
Her hallowed haunts once to the pilgrim known,
He nature's riches garners as his own.

III.

COOLIN CLIFFS.

"A hundred and a hundred savage peaks in the last light of day all glowing of gold and amethyst, like giant spirits of the wilderness there in their silence, in their solitude, even as on the night when Noah's deluge first dried."

SARTOR RESARTUS.

Since He rebuked the deluge, and the sea
Unto its confines in that hour of fear,
Summoned each wand'ring billow far and near,
These sterile cliffs, whose slaves the surges be,
Unquelled have towered in stern sublimity ;—
The storm their thrall,—hoarding each mist-born
tear,

The clouds controlling with embrace austere,
As erst they've been so shall these monarchs be
Till heav'n doth speak again ! Darkness' dread pall
The earth enwrap, the ocean, rended sky,—
And chaos wild his froward hosts recal,
Proud champions born for giant destiny ;
Ah ! then these peaks, lost in the silent wave,
Shall find a second,—a relentless grave.

IV.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL, LOCH MORAR.

From fair Italia bursts that fadeless ray,
Thy pageants proud embattled armies own,
And peace brings homage to thy victor throne,
The hallowed lamps that glimmer night and day,
Anear yon sainted tomb where nations pray,
Before thy chief, gold, myrrh, frankincense borne,
Recusant monarchs erst of kingdoms shorn,
Frail record of thy conquests, these convey !—
Among the pathless hills, by this lone lake,
Hymns of thy changeless ritual awake ;
To shrive each fervid penitent awaits,
These rocks thy subtle spirit penetrates,—
A votive people here thy laws obey
Who ne'er may tell whence springs that mystic
sway.

V.

KILBRYDE CASTLE—MORNING.

I.

Thou antique keep ! the radiant morn doth greet,
In azure ransomed from a softer clime,
Thy cloudless tow'r, whose dream of olden time,
Borne by the brooklet's murmur at thy feet,
Spell-bound still lingers in thy loved retreat.—
These sycamores would whisper days gone by,
These frowning rocks re-echo solemnly
Legends embalmed—for meditation meet.—
Ah ! may thy lesson through my gushing heart,
Calm down the tide of coming day descend,
As the kind counsel of a long-loved friend,
New joy thy soothing melodies impart—
Thus may I more thy grandeur comprehend,
Till dreamless sleep in brighter scenes shall end.

VI.

KILBRYDE CASTLE—EVENING.

II.

A Sabbath silence wraps the slumb'ring wold,
Save ever and anon some truant breeze
Steals o'er the hush that lulls the stately trees,—
Or wood doves languidly their wing unfold,
A home to seek within thine antique hold ;
Her vesper hymn the streamlet chaunteth clear,
The owlet moans, a solemn chronicler ;—
'Tis thus the time-worn tale is ever told.—
How calm, how pray'rful nature's glories lie,
Inspiring thought, in hopeful robe serene,
As twilight shadows waft tranquillity ;—
Ah ! might the rapture of this fairy scene
Be with its dream-fraught solace ever nigh,
No darkness augur dread despondency.

VII.

KILBRYDE CASTLE.

III.

Now from these western hills September's sun,
Since morn—of envious clouds indignant thrall,
Scatters his gold—a lordly prodigal—
Joyous that churlish day his course hath run,
Spans with yon rubied arch th' horizon dun,
To bless the promise of this autumn eve,
And from her cheerless dream the earth reprieve,
O'er vapour's hosts proclaims the triumph won !
Thus while on corn-clad field, on knoll, and tree,
His ray would lavish rich variety,
Their shadows far they cast exultingly,
As if this moral spake : Be ardent, lo !
Bright hope expands her ever radiant bow
O'er all thy brooding mists, Adversity !

VIII.

HAWTHORNDEN.

Yon low'ring clouds, fraught with autumnal rain,
Intent the struggling hills in mist to veil,
Through the dank air in gloom-clad silence sail—
Unto the glowing sunbeam yet amain,
These verdant summits cling,—proudly sustain
Their golden splendour, while the murky sky
Broodeth around in stern solemnity—
As ling'ring leaves their varied smile retain.—
Hark ! in the vale the sighing of the breeze
In lowly murmur whispers winter near,
Bold rocks,—pellucid waters, quiv'ring trees,
“ Not yet,” respond the “ summer's glory sere,”
Until each stricken bush her trust betray,
We own no fealty to thy wrathful sway.

IX.

THE DRUID STONE.

Bleak howls the wind round that wond'rous stone,
Rock'd to and fro on her perilous seat,
Braving the storm in that savage retreat ;
Proud state hast thou kept, wild, sullen, alone,
Unnumbered years on thy shelterless throne ;
By what spell upborne to that cloud-capt site,
How ministrant there, to unhallowed rite,
What terrible faith did thy worship own,
Ah, who may unfold ? All in darkness hid,
While winters thy realm have encompass'd,
Though at dawn ye list, or at twilight grey,
As the lichens whisper dread roundelay,
No voice may tell of the gore that was shed,
Of the priest, or victim evanish'd.

X.

THE BEACON.

Piercing with changeless glow the gloom of night,
Or faintly twinkling through the brooding mist,
Ere morning sun the restless wave hath kiss'd,
O'er his bold path the mariner aright,
Thy ray, benignant minister of light,
Guides through the turmoil of the wildest storm ;
Hope's sanctuary fair thy faithful form,
Throned amid surges in majestic might !
Ah ! through the conflict of the troubled soul,
In that dread sea where passions fiercely roll,
May truth's bright Torch from promontory high,
The dangers guard which crowd our destiny,
Wisdom unerring fend us from that shore,
Where once betrayed our barque shall be no more !

XI.

TO THE MORNING STAR.

Ah ! wherefore linger ? lo ! each faint compeer,
Whose waning halo fervid morn redeems,
Fades with the shadows of the world of dreams ;
Thy pensive light still soothes the gushing tear,
As morn on morn arises—year on year ;
Lone sentinel of that august array,
Whose hosts recede before triumphant day,
Anew thy watch-fire wake when Eve draws near !
Emblem of peace that robes the dawn of life,
Refulgent still when twilight mists are rife,
Ah ! may no storm-fraught hour disastrous mar,
The hopes that cling to thee, fair matin star !
Ne'er envious clouds of shrouding night bedim
The rapture of thy vesper requiem.

XII.

SCIENCE.

Science ! thou self-sustaining Pioneer,
Envoy of Truth, the mazy wilds disclose
Of nature's labyrinth. Earth's dread repose
With giant steps awake ; thy torch still near
Through caves uncouth to guide,—the starry
sphere
In glory tell. Ah ! may thy magnet true
Bid bold adventure's sons their search renew,
Though orb eccentric whelm the world with fear ;—
O'er sterile wolds vast cities proudly spring,
Flow'rs from the rock, rich verdure from the snow,
Hush ! on Promethean wings the tidings flow,
By thee proclaimed in cloud-borne heralding ;
The latest triumph awe-struck worlds admire,
Thy proud behest enslaves electric fire !

XIII.

FRANCE.

" La plus grande erreur, contre laquelle il faille prémunir les populations de nos campagnes, c'est que pour être représentant soi nécessaire d'avoir de l'éducation ou de la fortune."—CARNOT'S ADDRESS.

They prate of fallen grandeur, mourn the tale
Of woes encompassing his aged head,
Of outraged thrones,—of terror's hosts arrayed :—
The barque of mighty Gaul I more bewail,
Bereft of helmsman, compass, well-reefed sail,
Launched on the billows of the boding sea,
Whose treach'rous bosom echoes liberty,
As if that name profaned might quell the gale.
Who o'er the breakers now thy helm may guide ?
Alack ! they've rallied for her daring crew,
Men who ne'er clomb the gallant vessel's side,
Ne'er ocean's dark adventures struggled through,
Who spurn the chart,—the warnings of the skies,
Reckless encounter fear-fraught jeopardies.

XIV.

[MRS HAMILTON GRAY, in her interesting Tour through Etruria, notices the excavation made by the Gonfaliere Avolta in the year 1826 of the tomb of an ancient warrior of Tarquinia:—"He saw him crowned with gold, clothed in armour, with a shield, spear, and arrows by his side, and extended on his stone bier. But a change soon came over the figure—it trembled and crumbled, and vanished away; and, by the time that an entrance was effected, all that remained was the golden crown and a handful of dust, with some fragments of the arms."—*Sepulchres of Etruria*, p. 219.]

Since in this sullen vault immured, no ray
Hath mocked the silence of that ghastly state,
Shrouding the warrior Prince inviolate
With panoply austere, as if decay
Would to these mystic ceremonies yield her sway,
Oblivion stern her dusky veil forbear,
No spider toil within the murky air,
No nameless creatures revel on that prey.—
Through yon dim crevice for a moment see
His stately form,—baseless reality,
The seals are rent,—and at the breath of day
The shadow trembles,—mist-like, melts away,
Leaving the war-stained spear, the sceptre, crown,
In that dread realm usurped by Death alone.

XV.

Pure as baptismal font, the ransomed stream
Gushing obedient to some prophet wand,
Or hallowed spring that cheers the desert sand,
Be all thy thoughts ; bright as the silv'ry beam,
Which gems the couch where gentle fairies dream,
The silent azure of a southern sky,
The cynosure of winter's galaxy
Waking the stainless snow-flake's lucid gleam.—
Thy heart thus chastened, shall as nature free
List the rich music of the heav'nly spheres,
While the soft echo seraph hymn endears,
Lends to the leaves a mellow harmony ;
The dove whose blissful pinions waft content,
Still hov'ring o'er that fadeless firmament.

XVI.

ADIEU.

Ah ! might I lure, unto the fervid eye
One grateful tear, upon the heart one glow
Of gladsome hope, my fond award bestow,
Rich the return ! Ne'er may I lose a sigh
For him who frowns, or coldly passeth by :
While to the soul that would my truant song
From chill oblivion shield,—these notes prolong,
I proffer thus responsive sympathy ;
Dreaming mayhap, that if, in wealth festooned
Of summer flow'rs,—my wayward lyre had been,
Or to the hymn of balmy spring attuned,
In brighter moods I nature's self had seen,
Then amid autumn leaves, though echoed late,
A nobler strain my muse might emulate.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

NIGHT.

Dim the hour, the stars awaking,
 Thy shades o'er th' horizon breaking,
 As fev'rish Day to rest hath gone,
 The sleepless ether is thine own !
 Twilight to her cave retreating,
 Fitful dreams respond her greeting,
 Darkness dread, stern sway suspending,
 See the queen of Night ascending,
 As veiled stars their forms unfold,
 That crescent diadem behold—
 Silv'ry mist, and vapour swelling,
 Hover near thy tranquil dwelling,
 Pensive Eve, with dusky pinion,
 Heralding thy proud dominion,
 Gently resigns her fading light

At thy command, despotic Night !
While from ocean emanating,
Mystic clouds thine advent waiting,
Gloomily their shadows crowding,
All thy planets meekly shrouding ;
Wild meteors circling through the air,
Fantastic coruscations rare,
Bidding the moon her beams forbear !

Around thy chariot, tricksome elves,
Slumber disdaining, group themselves,
Or now intent on buxom sport,
Anon they flee thy sombre court ;
Unto the wassail hall repair,
With giddy mortals mingling there,
Heedless of jeopardy or pain,—
Ah ! why such freak did fate ordain ?
Yet nymphs there are of sober mien,
And solemn thought, who veil their queen
From scene uncouth,—their chaunt thy hymn,
Content benign their requiem ;

And ardent seek the hopes to share
Commingle with the just man's pray'r.—

Nor silent now the fragrant earth,
In leafy dells remote from mirth,
O'er mountains lone, or vales afar,
Responsive to thy vesper star,
The music of the rippling lake,
The breeze that fans the scented brake,
The stream that wanders through the lea,
Attuned to grateful melody—
In haunted solitudes sublime
The flow'r bell lends her faery chime,
While ev'ry leaf, on ev'ry tree
Exulteth in the harmony.—

Though toil within thy parent breast,
Subdued hath sunk to welcome rest,
Though childhood hushed, her pastime o'er,
From thee no dream-nursed boon implore,

How vain the dread such goddess e'er
Should lack devoted worshipper.—
Love whispers in thy sylvan bow'r,
Or ling'ring near some envious tow'r,
Where fitful ire immures the maid,
Awakes the faithful serenade.—
Learning reveals her potent spell,
In the rapt student's citadel.—
Thy burnished zone intent to climb,
The sage astrologer sublime
Prophetic opes the book of Time.—
The pilot, on the starless sea,
Murmurs his trustful lullaby.—
Thy languid echoes cheerless tell
The measured tread of sentinel.—
Wafted from hallowed shades of night,
The sigh of wav'ring neophyte
On thee awaits ; and hark the creed,
Muttered again o'er oft-told bead !
As doth the minster bell proclaim
Each hour that chronicles thy name.

Refuge the guilty seek with thee,
Thy gloom enfolds despondency ;
From irksome day at length set free
Pale sorrow comes imploringly ;
Ah ! yield, " we pray," oblivion deep,
Our souls to lull in dewy sleep,
While shame to thy far worlds would creep ;
Forgetful of the dreams that hie,
Terrific o'er thy peopled sky,
Dread messengers of wrath, and fear,
Who to thy confines float anear,
Wielding in grisly treachery
(A fated dowry won from thee)
Horrors that mock reality.

But cease such themes ! Still with thee, Night,
Bring blest reflection's calm delight,
Ah, bid the weary share with thee
The hoarded stores of memory,
Which in sybilline silence lie
In thine exhaustless treasury.—

Banish, ere gleams the joyous day,
Avengeful shadows far away,
And oft intent on high emprise
The closed eye-ball of the wise,
(As fervid visions raptured spring),
Anoint with holy visiting.—
Thus through thy shades the gifted see,
Faint dawns of futurity.—
As erst creation proud arose
Thee chaos found in blank repose,
Ere sun or moon or planet fair
Thy haughty kingdom sought to share.

DAY.

Haste to thy depths of pristine birth,
In cheerless caverns of the earth,
Or lost beneath the chartless sea,
Dread darkness, to thy chambers flee ;—
Hark ! Now the ever-living voice
Biddeth the world with light rejoice ;
Beyond the mountain summits grey,
Glimmers the heralding of day ;
See morn hath donn'd her robe of gold,
While fleecy clouds their forms unfold,
As the sun in splendour climbing,
Soars amid seraphic hymning,
Silence departeth, while the star,
Which tends the dew-drop, sinks afar.

There is a rustling in the brake,
The songsters sweetest carol make ;
A cheering whisper through the trees,
The chaunt of heav'n-born melodies ;
The ocean glad in gentler fall,
Resumes his matin madrigal,
From blooming land, from leafy isle,
He greets thee with a grateful smile,
As yonder realms of stainless blue,
With rainbow spray of wond'rous hue,
Their summer witchery renew ;
While stately rivers, tuneful streams,
Arousèd from their solemn dreams,
Glide sylvan harmonies among,
Enfranchised from the dreary song
They drowsy murmured all night long.

The dazzling azure welcomes thee,
Embued with hope's bright augury,
As silv'ry clouds encircling vie

The glowing mountain-crests anigh,
How the lark revels in the sky !
Day glimmers in the shady nook,
Faintly reveals the willowed brook ;
Now where the gushing torrents throw
Their new-born spray of fairest snow,
Displays the lustre of his bow ;
While peerless glories softly wake,
On the calm bosom of the lake,
Refulgent from that mirror true ;—
Whence doth each flow'ret snatch her hue
Of fragrant beauty ? 'Tis from you.

The jovial huntsman's thrilling horn,
The reaper's glee among the corn ;
From village youth,—from maiden gay,
The chaunt of matin roundelay ;
The shepherd's pipe, whose echoes stray,
“ Over the hills and far away ;”
The tended herd, the homeless goat,
The deer that bounds o'er wilds remote ;

The silent tenants of the stream,
Gliding along in tranquil dream ;
The air-born legions as they veer
From early note of chanticleer,
Till the dull owlet moans anear,—
To thee their varied tribute bring,
One all-accordant offering.

The east is thine. In molten gold
Thy wealth her glowing spheres unfold,
Thy promise charms the northern cold ;
Now glancing o'er the ocean's breast,
It gilds the rocks that fend the west ;
Or steep'd in softest southern balm,
Lingers amid the breezeless calm.—
Thy zephyrs fan the flow'rs of spring,
Their radiant petals ransoming ;
Or in some shady thicket green,
Where summer seeks a grateful screen,
Thy smile by musing pilgrim seen,
Glinting each bosky dell between.

And oh ! what tints the autumn yields,

To grace her richly laden fields.

Should winter hoar enchain the scene,

Thy cheering ray will intervene.

Hence the glad earth, the rolling sea,

Still loath to bid adieu to thee,

Prolong the raptur'd harmony.

The Skies, as Night resumes her sway,

With Tears embalm expiring Day.

HOPE.

A halo to the summer's ray,
A boon to winter's fleeting day,
Balm to the blossom of the spring,
Splendour the autumn mellowing,—
Such tribute thine.—Thy radiant bow
Faithful o'er life's horizon throw,
With holy rapture, fadeless Hope!
Illume my fitful horoscope ;
Ah, bid each boding cloud forbear,
Nor fling a dusky shadow there,
While thus my spirit rests with thee
Thronèd with calm fidelity.

When thy soft accents linger near,
Faint sorrow shall the echo hear,
Unto far shelter craven fear,
Shall flee such seraph harbinger,

Until thy breath of love be past,
Dismay shall never ride the blast,
Or, if such thrall she would redeem,
Thou comest in the midnight dream,
The darkness piercing with thy beam.
Ever thy chaste benignant smile,
The toil-worn pilgrim doth beguile,
O'er guilty slumber troubled,—rare,
Hallowing the repentant prayer,
As if an angel's self were there.

Intent thou dost abide to save
The wrecks which vengeful waters brave,
To ransom from the ebbing wave,
All that the sated storm-drift gave.
Thou dost revive the drooping wing,
Bedew the flow'ret withering,
Gently sustain, in hour of need,
The smoking flax, the bruised reed.
The latest leaf yon fading tree
May hoard, is from thy treasury.

The struggling torch that waning flies,
By thee illumined as it dies ;
And ere the aspen cease to quiver,
Thou dost its boughs embalm for ever ;
The hour of gloom, the twilight blessing,
Tender as love in thy caressing ;—
What though the night be dread—forlorn,
Thy smile evokes the promised morn,
While, day on day, resolve serene
Joyful awaits her Seraph Queen.

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

1.

The *Clouds* have love. How daintily they float !
Through azure sporting in their pastime rare,
From the glad sun a golden dow'r they win,
Now with the rainbow fairy dalliance seek ;—
Or, as the moon her silv'ry veil unfolds,
O'er coming darkness in repentant tears,
The waning orbs they mourn—benignant dews
Evoke, and sleepless tarry for the day.

2.

The *Stars* have love. Their votive realms endeared,
With beacon torch resplendent o'er the sky
Now waft prophetic mystery, or now
Unto the lover's simpler serenade
Seraphic harmony respond ; proudly
Some envoy bold o'er heav'ns savannahs speeds
The proffered vow—Imagination blest
Our long imprisoned ecstacies renew.

3.

The *Waves* have love. Amid the solitude
Of the far wastes, unto their haughty Queen
They homage bring, at her relenting will
More bounteous realms explore, and as she frowns,
On the rude shore the heaving surges break,
Faintly the storm-vexed seabird maketh plaint,
Or mellowed waters murmur lullaby,
As roseate shells the madrigal resound.

4.

The *Trees* have love. Around ancestral halls
They cluster fondly—sentinel the path,
Where guardian rooks in cheerful hordes abide,
Beneath their spreading boughs shelter vouchsafe,
A gourd refreshing from the summer beam,
As songsters carol o'er the verdant scene,
Or in the "ruin'd choir" their vesper keep,
While strains Æolian murmur of the past.

5.

The *Flowers* have love. Ere droops the latest Star,
The wanton zephyrs woo their opening leaves,
At morn they blush their bridegroom Lord to meet,
Who on their fragrant altar incense flings,
Yet will they coyly fend his gifts till eve,
Their chalice closing as his rays depart,
And through the tears which glisten on their bloom,
Their rainbow dreams mirror his blest return.

6.

The *Streams* have love. In ocean depths she dwells,
Her fitful wave they seek—their bounding course
In mountain-torrent gladsomely pursue,
Or crystal streamlet sparkle ; haply now
In oozy tide of willowed brook they wend
O'er daisied mead, rich vale, or wooded dell,
Or in majestic flow—the giant might—
Of river proud—'mid Andes born afar.

7.

The *Winds* have love. O'er hills and pathless wolds,
To city, temple, tow'r, lone pyramid,
To shell, and reed, and stringèd instrument,
Wild notes they chaunt—each leaf, each blade of grass,
With fresh'ning balm imbue—life-giving speed
Empyrean fragrance on their fearless wing,
Now proudly answer to the mountain hoar,
Now o'er the lakelet's bosom gently steal.

8.

The silent *Tarn* hath love. To her pure breast
The mountain shadows cling. The wand'ring breeze
Faint ripple waketh o'er the placid wave,
Whose cadence murmurs music all her own ;—
Yet will the plaintive pipe these lonely shores
With melody endear—a song of spring
Among the water-lilies whisper soft,
Nor echo rude such harmony invade.

9.

The *Snows* have love. Now at the fervid suit
Of glowing Day in golden robe attired,
Their hoary Alpine home they fain forsake,
And ransom'd thus, the arid vale bedew ;
Now greet the orb of Night whose fainter boon
Their sparkling gems eclipse—rival the stars—
Or some fantastic meteor's changeful glow
Athwart their silv'ry minarets allure.

10.

The *Rocks* have love. Within their ocean caves
The dolphins play, or from the angry gale
The love-lorn mermaid craves a rude repose,
The eagle builds her eyrie in the cliff,
And from these sterile summits Pharos sheds,
(Seaward the wave-worn mariner to warn)
The lustre of his cloud-wrapt diadem,
A bow of promise—radiate o'er the spray.

11.

The *Wilderness* hath love. Her handmaid Hope,
Amid the silence of these deserts rude,
Where time no record yet hath chronicled,
The Lode-star hails—sees outcast hordes attain
That lonely haven—blooming verdure spread—
The rich Artesian fountains spring to light,
As bounteous science waves her puissant wand,
Where bold adventure wond'ring echo wakes.

12.

Have *We* then love? Ah, search the widowed heart,
Whose hero son beneath war's banner falls ;
Ask the time-honoured sire whose stately house
Revenge hath blighted as a scathèd tree,
The cell of the soul-stricken neophyte,
The desolation of the tomb. Alas !
Nor clouds, the wind, the wave, the fading flow'r,
Nor trembling aspen, mutable as man.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WAVE.

1.

As the faint sea bird droops her wing,
Thy tuneful zephyrs freshness fling,
Amid glad ocean's revelling ;
Or by the coming tempest taught,
With strains of wilder music fraught,
In terror born, triumphant King,
What woes, Oh wave ! thy conflicts bring,
The trembling world encompassing !

2.

Now in the wond'ring infant's ear
Thy softest cadence whispers near,
With waning echo waking fear ;—
Or riding 'mid the ruthless storm,
Uprearing thy gigantic form,
Far o'er the shrouds thy crests appear,
As the vex'd barque would vainly veer,
To fend the fated marinere.

3.

Their sunlit bosoms southern seas
Heave gently in the balmy breeze,
Lull'd with thy soothing harmonies ;—
Now as tumultuous breakers roar,
Thou dashest on the rock-bound shore ;
Or if such freak thy fancy please,
Rude Lapland "revelry and ease,"
Mocking with wilder symphonies.

4.

O'er coral caves thy murmur swells ;—
Re-echoed from melodious shells,
Her tale the moaning mermaid tells ;
The lonely mountains list thy chime,
In solemn mystery,—sublime,
Beyond the realms, whose Sabbath bells
Proclaim where calm devotion dwells,—
Thy changeful hymn the hush dispels.

5.

The ebbing and the flowing tide
Their destinies to thee confide,
Unwearied tend thee !—fitful guide ;
Rolling now, and now retreating,
Every shore thy wonders greeting,
By sunny isle,—by iceberg's side,
By caverns dread where dolphins hide,
Thy daring vassalage abide.

6.

A spirit art thou of the morn,
Thy gems doth spangling Eve adorn,
Nor may proud Noon thy glory scorn,
As solemn Midnight hears thy voice,
Still would thine ocean hosts rejoice ;
Or oft from Titan's sullen horn,
Thy dismal warning wildly borne,
Pierceth the wakeful heart forlorn !

7.

The wearied songsters sink to sleep,
Fierce creatures to their ambush creep,
The vales,—the hills blest silence keep ;
Restless in calm, or coming storm,
Thine ever undulating form ;
And as thy surge swells, heap o'er heap,
In mystic thunder, vengeful deep !
Sadly thy boding billows sweep.

8.

Thou dreamest in the calm Tyrrhene,
Far o'er the Baltic's ruder scene,
Thy fear-fraught Andes intervene ;
Toss'd at thy will, from shore to shore,
Th' Atlantæan breakers roar ;
And ah ! Amid thy depths serene,
Where wary plummet ne'er hath been,
How calmly sleep thy dead, stern Queen !

9.

There rest the young, there rest the old,
There sleep the timid, there the bold,
The fated tale by sorrow told ;
Nor satiate ere thy wrath with those
Who in thy cheerless realms repose ;
Thou, as the miser grasps his gold
In savage thrall resolved shalt hold,
Unnumber'd prey within thy fold.

10.

How oft allur'd by placid wile,
Thy golden sands our steps beguile,
Unto some far Circæan Isle,
Where dreaming of savannahs blest,
We sink within thy tyrant breast ;
In diapason deep the while,
As zephyrs waft a treach'rous smile,
Thy murmur woos the bounteous Nile.

11.

And, ah ! relentless—this thy pride,
Allegiance madly to deride,
Freedom is mine, and whose beside ?
The vaunt thy rocks re-echo lone—
As Earth responds with deeper moan ;
Is there no law the sea to guide ?
O'erwhelming shall her billows ride ?
In faith like hers who dares confide ?

12.

Yet breaking soft, or dashing free,
Amid repose, or jeopardy,
No spirit spell-bound chafes like thee ;
Cycle on cycle, night and noon,
Thrall of the ever watchful moon,
Tho' winds around thee lawless flee,
Obedient still, thou sullen sea,
Sport of her froward sorcery.

13.

Ah ! when that Pow'r which bid thee rise
(As chaos hailed in vague surmise
The advent of thine energies,)
Rest shall ordain—in solemn calm,
Pour on thy bosom blissful balm,
No more shalt thou, the good, the wise,
Engulph, as demon Vengeance dies,
In thine unhallowed destinies.

THE SPIRIT OF NATURE.

1.

Fond child of Nature ! tell me where
Thy spirit loves to rest,
On teeming earth, in ambient air,
Or ocean's changeful breast ?

2.

The clustered vine her couch she makes,
Or on the moonlit sea,
Far in the starry world awakes,
Or dreams of liberty.

3.

Now in the vale by leafy haunt
Her cherished bower may be,
Where thrilling warblers blithely chaunt
Their woodland melody.

4.

The pensive flowers her fragrance love,
At morn their bosoms heave,
At noon she tends them in the grove,
Their chalice shuts at eve.

5.

Now by enamelled meadow gay
The tranquil folds among,
Now o'er the green hills far away,
Tending the fleecy throng.

6.

By breathing morn, by twilight dim,

In darkness, garish day,

Her echo wafts the raptured hymn,

Or home-born roundelay.

7.

Within the solemn woods she hides,

Seeking some verdant screen,

Amid whose depths old oak presides,

His labyrinth of green.

8.

Now on the mountain crest she broods

O'er realms of pathless snow,

Or courts less daring solitudes,

Where tranquil waters flow.

9.

Then with the stately river speeds,
Or glides the stream along,
Lurks by the lake, whose whisp'ring reeds
Murmur a plaintive song.

10.

Now sports by fount with stars begemm'd,
Of purest azure born,
Now richest tints endiadem'd,
Her varied Bow adorn.

11.

Beneath the sparkling wave she dwells,
Wrapt in crystalline spheres,
Where music, chimed from roseate shells,
Her emerald home endears.

12.

By smiling shore, where eastern balm,
With gentle zephyrs hie,
She droops adown to greet the calm,
Wooed by the harmony.

13.

O'er fervent sunbeam, glowing cloud,
Expands her fearless wing,
Nor dreads the gale that echoes loud
A wilder welcoming.

14.

With flight unwearied cleaves the sky,
Amid the ether blue—
Reckless if sun or moon be nigh,
Or planet glimmer true.

15.

Now Morn her harbinger—now Eve—

A dew-crowned tribute bring,

She doth from fervid noon receive

A votive offering.

16.

Now doth the ever watchful Night

A homage calm supply,

And oft in silv'ry robe bedight,

Bring benedicite.

17.

Hath she no music? Ask the sea:

Or ask the gushing stream

And hark, Æolian harmony

Now lulls the forest's dream.

18.

The fated avalanche is hers—
The timid aspen's chime—
The mountains proud her worshippers,
In symphony sublime.

19.

Hath she no handmaid? Lo! the spring,
When bursts the blooming May;
Or see rich fruit the reapers bring,
In harvest holiday.

20.

On her rude winter waits—his car
Amid the drift doth speed;
Glad summer welcomes her afar
O'er yonder smiling mead.

21.

Still doth she bind in mystic power
My heart with awe profound,
Should planet fall in troublous hour,
Or tempest fell astound.

22.

Here let her couch, or wander there,
That spirit findeth rest
On teeming earth, in ambient air,
Or ocean's changeful breast.

LAMENT OF THE OLD OAK.

1.

Lay with the dead the Old Oak Tree ;

Ah, chaunt a requiem for me,

With solemn mass, and litany ;

I may not brave the winter's storm,

My boughs are scathèd—tempest torn,

Myself—dethronèd—doom'd—forlorn.

2.

Erst in the vaunting of my prime,

I towered while thunder pealed sublime,

Heedless of jeopardy, or clime ;

My leaves now wake not with the spring,
No balm doth breathing summer bring,
No acorn autumn welcoming.

3.

Rich was my robe—from crest to stem,
The dew drops kissed my garment's hem,
Spangled my verdant diadem ;
Till Time despotic, day by day—
Relentless comrade of decay—
Each sapless fibre snatched away.

4.

For me no more the azure sky,
From dawn until the stars be high,
Sheddeth life-giving sympathy ;
And while the gales are gath'ring loud,
The sullen mist, the boding cloud,
Remorseless weave my murky shroud.

5.

How joyous oft in leafy June,
As rung the choir their varied tune,
At eve, or morn, or glowing noon ;
But one by one in fresher shade,
Of new found bowers,—their plaint they made,
And left me lonely in the glade.

6.

When I was dauntless, smiling, young,
The parasites around me clung,
Their incense on mine altar flung ;
Alas ! now naked, sere, behold !
The ivy droops with faithless fold,
In sorrow, friendship ah, how cold !

7.

Why will these warblers o'er me chaunt ?
As if they scorned this ruined haunt,
In desolation bleak and gaunt ;

Time was they wooed the hallowed nook,
Ere my proud dome the sun forsook—
Forgetfulness how hard to brook.

8.

Why will the stream that note prolong ?
Ling'ring her pebbled hosts among,
There is no music in her song ;
Better to hear these groves evoke
The echo of the woodman's stroke,
As prostrate sinks the giant oak.

9.

Cow'ring beneath the chilling snow,—
Far better hear the harsh winds blow,
Than see the primrose near me grow ;
The blooming daisy brings no dower,
No balmy star-grass scents the shower,
The violet a cheerless flower !

10.

Then let the solemn mass be said,
The forest litany be read,
Ah, lay me with the tranquil dead ;
For me let nature's tear-drops fall,
The lowly lichens deck my pall,
While woodland breezes sigh o'er all !

THE ILLSTARR'D BRIDE.

1.

The glimm'ring stars to slumber glide,
As dawn adown the steep
Her glory from the mountain side
Sheds o'er yon lonely keep.

2.

The vale awakens from her dream
Embathed in stainless dew,
Amid the music of the stream,
How soft the ether blue.

3.

Yet to the Maid, whom that dread tow'r
 Holdeth in sullen thrall,
Hope springs not with the matin hour,
 'Tis sad as evening's pall.

4.

She hears the wailing in the shrouds,
 The murmur of the wave,
What ceaseless conflict cleaves the clouds,
 How lone *his* ocean grave!

5.

Cheerless to her the summer's sun,
 The brooklet's chime anear,
She dreams of her betrothèd one,
 And all her dreams are fear.

6.

Fear whispers in the early breeze,
 Blighteth the noon-day flow'r,
It lurks among the stately trees,
 Saddens the twilight hour.

7.

Ah! mock me not, false hope! she cries,
 Far o'er the faithless sea
I hear the moan that never dies,
 His fear-fraught lullaby.

8.

Sadly yet soft the murmur died,
 Before the ling'ring dew
Was ransom'd from the grass-grown side
 Of yonder shelt'ring yew.

9.

Ah ! still to her that cypress tree
Caught echo of the song,
Sweeping, in dirge-like melody,
The solemn boughs among.

10.

The burthen of her plaintive hymn
Gave back its fitful breath,
Responsive to the summoning
Still chaunted far beneath.

11.

I'm coming, I'm coming, o'er mountain and plain,
To dwell with my true love, to clasp him again ;
My bridal song chaunt, 'mid the roar of the sea,
Bid the ocean afar echo harmony.

12.

The torch at the altar all rayless may gleam,
The priest who betroth'd us a phantom beseem,
The bridegroom a shadow,—yet dearer to me—
Than adorn'd in the noontide of chivalry.

13.

Mayhap, when I meet thee, though chill our embrace,
The dawn of a smile may illumine thy face ;
The shades of the past shall like mist melt away,
The night of dark sorrow awake unto day.

14.

I fly to thy caverns, thou fathomless sea,
Ye troops of the dreamless, show'r welcome on me ;
Farewell, ye loved mountains, ye valleys adieu,
Far wastes of the ocean, my heart is with you.

15.

O'er earth's lonely limits no longer I roam,
The dolphins keep watch where I've chosen my home ;
Our amulet, faithful, we pledge to the tide ;
The billows are hush'd as I rest by thy side.

16.

The light that gleams o'er us is mellowed and green,
No sunlight, no moonlight, but something between ;
The gems that surround us with chrysolites vie,
And the arch of wide waters our canopy.

17.

A coral-wreathed temple our love bower shall be,
Of the shelldrift and seaweed its tracery,
From Iris of azure whence tempest hath fled,
The bright waves their spangles prismatic shall shed.

18.

While the proud surges heave, now ebb and now flow,
United we seek the savannahs below,
No storm ere may reach that enchanted domain,
Whose waters encircling love's raptures retain.

19.

Once more earth's dread confines, I bid ye farewell,
Our love the gay mermaid exulting shall tell,
From fountain primæval our joy ever sure,
In music shall gush while the waters endure.

20.

I'm coming, I'm coming, o'er mountain and plain,
To dwell with my true love, to clasp him again ;
My bridal song chaunt, 'mid the roar of the sea,
Bid the ocean afar echo harmony.

21.

Ah, woe betide the stricken maid !

He cometh all too late,

Her gorgeous 'tire aside is laid,

A shroud enwraps her fate.

22.

From mailèd breast resolve hath fled,

Nerveless the mailèd hand,

His dauntless eye no tear-drop shed,

As round her bier they stand.

23.

No cadence wild, from wave afar,

Now wakes her frenzied dream,

No time-born tempests ruthless mar

That sainted requiem.

24.

A hermit meek at yonder shrine
Doth fervid vigil keep,
Imploring endless love divine
To guard her tranquil sleep.

CHRISTMAS.

1.

What though the sullen clouds may frown,
The air be dank and cold,
A lightsome hand hath wove the gown
That wraps kind Christmas old.

2.

Youth welcomes thee with gambols gay,
With hopes more tranquil age,
Contentment chaunts thy roundelay,
Glad'ning earth's pilgrimage.

3.

No fragrance o'er the waning year
The balm of summer throws,
Yet chill the heart thou dost not cheer
Thou simple Christmas rose !

4.

The holly tells of olden times,
Of song in wassail hall ;
The antique tower, with merry chimes,
Heralds thy festival.

5.

The crackling hearth thy welcome makes
With misletoe anear,
And yet methinks remembrance wakes,
The absent, ah how dear !

6.

Thy vassal breathes no selfish tale,
Rich thought the past supplies ;
The bark best stems the changeful gale
Fraught with loved memories !

7.

Yet do not *these* thy fervid hour,
Thine ardent joys gainsay,
Nor fond memorial claim the power
To dash such holiday.

8.

Thus shall I still to blithesome glee,
To modest mirth incline,
Circled with genial harmony,
Thy household name enshrine.

SIR WALTER'S STATUE.

1.

Why leave ye to the sacking storm,
To vapours dank and dun,
Of fragile stone my breathing form,
From fair Carrara won?

2.

No dewy turf enwraps my feet,
No daisy, yellow broom ;
No soaring lark ere warbles sweet
High o'er this stately tomb.

3.

The gentle Tweed I may not hear
Murmur her matin hymn ;
Nor brook nor lakelet whisper near
Their vesper requiem.

4.

Nature's fond child, my shade would roam
O'er verdant Eildon free,
Hark, lone St Mary warns me home,
Loved Yarrow mourns for me.

5.

Ah ! was it meet to shrine me here,
Amid the city's din,
From woodlands humblest chorister
I melody would win.

6.

To Temple for the mighty reared
Ne'er did my hopes aspire ;
O'er Scotland's hills and dales revered,
'Twas all my soul's desire.

7.

Or if a sculptur'd dome of rest
My country shall decree,
Through solemn aisle the organ blest
Would gush in harmony.

8.

Yet, if ye list, I am content,
No Pæan I demand,
The world hath reared my monument,
My name—My native land !

WELL OF ST JOHN'S, STANWICH.

1.

The ivy clasps thy belfry wall,
Twines round the time-worn tree ;
Tearful these changeless leaves recall
Thy monks to memory.

2.

The holly sighs for times gone by,
The primrose of the spring
Whispers a fainter melody,
As 'twere a welcoming.

3.

Thy song, as in the olden day,
 Warbleth a matin hymn,
Or avè mingles in the lay
 Of raptured requiem.

4.

Then mourn not, fair St John's, the hour,
 When on the wings of peace,—
A simpler Faith—thy richest dower,
 Bid mass and bead-roll cease.

5.

Not less that Well is holy now,
 Her music no less sweet,
Though Pilgrim bring no sainted bough,
 Nor Nun a prayer repeat.

6.

The hopes which cheer the contrite heart,
Ne'er heed what pomps bestow ;
Ah ! may His blessing ne'er depart
Who bade these waters flow.

7.

Thus, Stanwich, still that font be thine,
Her love-fraught tribute due,
Thus ever, at a purer shrine,
Thy litany renew.

STANWICH, *April* 13, 1849.

TO A FALLEN TREE.

Again the fragrant zephyr of the spring,
The breath of summer, fraught with glad'ning
balm,
Shall ransom whisper to the leafless dell ;
Yet art thou stricken ! Nor thy proud compeers,
In bright array of new-born verdure clad,
This desolation mourn. What then thy fate ?
Thy prostrate form shall faithful ivy fend ;
Unto thy shattered stem the lichen cling ;
The dewy moss with tears thy boughs embalm ;
As ceaseless echo through some ruined hall,
The bee shall murmur in thy scathèd root ;
The tiny gossamer his loom entwine ;

His 'scutcheon frail the silent spider weave.—
Aye to thy fall'n shrine, in musing mood,
Some pilgrim shall repair, while solemn dreams
The mists of dim futurity dissolve,
As sorrow hovers o'er thy hapless doom,
Or blest contentment seeks thy humble home ;
And though the babbling brook no more may woo
Thine autumn leaves her tranquil course adown,
Thy semblance mirror'd in her gentle breast
Shall fond fidelity and love recall,
While hope still lingers where the ground flow'rs
bloom.

27th December 1847.

FRAGMENT.

Say what the dream ye boast—reality—
Ling'ring on that stern tide where ebbs the past ?
Daring the billows of futurity,
Amid the sparkling spray we present deem
The echo catching of the breaking wave ?
Hath glory grasped her ? Doth she dwell with fame ?
Cherished by love in fond serenity ?
Doth wealth's tiara bind her haughty brow ?
Doth high imagination hold her thrall ?
Soars she on wings of fair philosophy,
By science girded in that eyrie proud ?

The morn awaits her fraught with dewy pearls,
The balmy eve a hallowed fragrance brings,

The noon-day courts her among glowing clouds,
Her music stealeth o'er the tranquil sea,
Through mists which oft the mountain summits veil,
Amid the pathless wilderness of trees,
The silent azure of the starry sky.

The wond'ring infant startles at her form,
Youth hails her semblance, graced with fervid hope,
Manhood beholds her in that flick'ring glass,
Where passion's slaves their fev'rish phantoms cast—
Her solemn shadow cheerless age bedims.

Ah, list that lowly accent, faithful, sad,
Borne on the curfew bell ; borne but to bring
Chill tidings of her lowly dwelling-place,
Whereto, the turmoil o'er, she welcome gives,
Shelter within that turf-clad citadel,
Whose silent garrison no danger dream ;
The grass their banner whisp'ring in the wind,
The daisy's bloom their peaceful heraldry.

FRAGMENT.

From hallowed depths, methinks, the warning
comes,

Ah, list the mighty boding, child of dust,
While time's dark pinions still on flight intent
Shadow the day-star of this fleeting world ;—
The breath of nameless flow'rs, bright with the dew
Of that celestial sphere ; the solemn hush
Of ether, robed in glory holier far
Than our dim firmament shall ere divine ;
Empyrean temples, cities, domes, and tow'rs,
Their lofty pinnacles with triumphs crowned,
Their deep foundations in that ocean laid,
Whose bosom spurns the changeful tide of time,
Her shores beyond the ravage of decay.

SONNET.

Whether with iron throb the boding chime
Of sorrow's cadence whelm, or silv'ry bell
Of joy's soft sympathy enraptured tell,
Still is thy lapse a mystery sublime ;
Thine echoes, spell-borne to that wond'rous clime,
Where clouds eternal, in commingled mass,
Rich memories enthrall—Thy wealth, alas !
In their calm bosom still engulfed, oh, Time !
Fond youth thy wing would speed, age fain delay
Thy smiling hour—Hope to thy dial cling—
Despair invoke thy fear-fraught summoning ;
Nor pow'r, nor pray'r, thy tyrant course shall stay.
O'er crumbling temple, tow'r, thy banners wave,
Within thine urn our hearts oblivion crave.

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